



The Chronicle

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WIRED GRANT PROGRAM ASKS:

"Is YOUR COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE-READY?"

This is the second in a series of four articles by college presidents on "enterprise-ready" activities. Alabama Southern Community College, Bevill State Community College, East Central Community College, East Mississippi Community College, Jones County Community College, Meridian Community College, Shelton State Community College, and Wallace State Community College - Selma are the colleges that have joined together to strengthen the West Alabama - East Mississippi region.

Is your community "enterprise-ready?" How many of our communities in West Alabama and East Mississippi are "enterprise-ready?" What is an "enterprise-ready" community, anyway? How is an "enterprise-ready" community different from any other community?

Champions. If you had to pick one thing about "enterprise-ready" communities it would be their champions. These are the men and women who stand-up, push, and persist to make and keep their communities enterprise and entrepreneur friendly. Many are successful business leaders who invest time and effort back into their communities. Others are public officials, economic developers, chamber of commerce directors, or civic club leaders. It does not really matter where they come from, the point is that "enterprise-ready"

communities have them and support them.

Yes, an "enterprise-ready" community is one that successfully makes enterprise and entrepreneurship a top priority. You can tell one by its positive attitude, economic vitality, willingness to embrace innovation ... and its champions.

Jack Schultz says you can tell one by looking at who is moving into the community. The author of the compelling book, *Boomtown USA*, about positive trends in rural America, Schultz does not use the phrase "enterprise-ready." However, the characteristics he describes for booming rural towns to which talented people are moving in droves matches what we mean.

We represent two of eight community and junior colleges in West Alabama and East Mississippi that have joined together to help our communities become "enterprise-ready," to find and grow more champions, and to give new and existing champions more and better tools and resources to work with.

A national foundation has committed \$2 million to build a comprehensive entrepreneurship development system for rural North Carolina. Other

rural entrepreneur projects are underway in Nebraska, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, and West Virginia. These rural regions are showing that more aggressive approaches to and support for entrepreneurship can help replace declining industrial jobs.

We believe our communities can best be served by coupling local champions with the tools and resources in these innovative entrepreneurship development systems. Your community and junior colleges have long and proud histories of providing training and counseling for entrepreneurs and small businesses. What we are talking about here, though, is something very different.

A comprehensive entrepreneur development system integrates programs, services, and leadership into an easy to access system. It includes community-based entrepreneur coaching and mentoring, access to technology and toolkits, and networking. In addition to traditional training and counseling, it includes access to financing and venture capital, university research, state and federal programs, and national service providers. It focuses on getting community ordinances, codes, and regula-

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Theatre Tuscaloosa Presents Neil Simon's Rumors

A wedding anniversary celebration gone awry creates loads of rumors and laughter when Theatre Tuscaloosa opens Neil Simon's "Rumors" in the Bean-Brown Theatre on the campus of Shelton State Community College on September 29.

When several affluent couples arrive at a party in a highly upper-class house in New York, they discover that there are no servants, the hostess has disappeared and the host has shot himself through the earlobe. Simon's original sense of humor keeps the audience alive with laughter as the host's lawyer tries to plan a cover-up and the friends try frantically to protect their host who is the deputy mayor of New York.

Neil Simon is the world's most successful

playwright. He has had dozens of plays and nearly as many motion pictures produced. He has been showered with more Academy and Tony nominations than any other writer, and is the only playwright to have four Broadway productions running simultaneously. His plays have been produced in dozens of languages, and have been blockbuster hits all over the world.

Directed by Tina Fitch, the cast includes Ray Taylor, Kathy Wilson, Drew Baker, Gary Wise, Jill Parsons, Doug Perry, Sara Catherine Thomason, Brad Williams, John Wimberley and Julie Arrington.

Scenic design is by Wheeler Kincaid, set decoration by Ray Taylor, lighting design by John Hisey and costume design by Jeannette Waterman.

Performances of "Rumors" are scheduled for September 29, 30, October 5, 6, 7 at 7:30 P.M. and October 1, 4, and 8 at 2:00 P.M. Tickets prices are: Adults \$17.00; Seniors \$14.00; Student/Children \$10.00 and SSCC students \$5 with ID.

A special "Pay What You Can" Final Dress Rehearsal is scheduled for September 28 at 7:30 P.M. This season, Theatre Tuscaloosa will be contributing the income from these performances to the "Charlie Dennis Memorial Scholarship Fund" established through the Shelton State Foundation.

For additional information or to purchase tickets by phone, call the Theatre Tuscaloosa box office at 205-391-2277.

WIRED *continued*

tions to be as business-friendly as possible. It includes access to incubators and Make-A-Job Enterprise Centers (MAJEC).

And, it does all this at the community level. Through local champions, local community and junior college support, and broadband technology,

our entrepreneurs can have access to the very best...and should.

With help from a U.S. Department of Labor Workforce Innovation in Rural Economic Development grant as well as Governors Bob Riley and Haley Barbour, eight community colleges are committing leadership and support to strengthen enterprise and entrepreneurship

in our Alabama-Mississippi region. Each of our colleges will add staff to work with communities to identify champions and build entrepreneur development systems.

We invite all our communities to join us and help us become a region known for its "enterprise-ready" communities.

GOT NEWS TO SHARE?

If you have news, events or information to share with your fellow faculty and staff, please submit the information to the Office of Public Relations and Alumni Affairs.

The Chronicle is published the first of each month. Information should be received by the 20th of the preceding month in order to be included.